

REMARKS

The Office Action dated February 24, 2004 presents the examination of claims 16, 19-22, 24-26, and 28-29. Claims 1-15 remain withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-16, 19-20, 24-25, and 28-29 are canceled herein. Claims 21, 22, and 26 are amended into independent form. Upon entry of this Reply, claims 21, 22, and 26 will be pending. No new matter is inserted into the application.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objects to claims 21, 22, and 26 for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but notes that claims 21, 22, and 26 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form. In response to the Examiner's remarks, claims 21, 22, and 26 are amended into independent form. Since upon entry of this Reply, only claims 21, 22, and 26 will be pending, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge patentability of these claims and allow the present application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 16, 19-20, 24-25, and 28-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), for allegedly being unpatentable over Goldberg '144 in view of Pu et al. In order to

expedite allowance of the present application, but not to acquiesce to the Examiner's rejection, claims 16, 19-20, 24-25, and 28-29 are canceled herein. Thus, the instant rejection is moot.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding rejections/objections of record have been properly accommodated such that the present application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance indicating that claims 21, 22, and 26 are allowed.

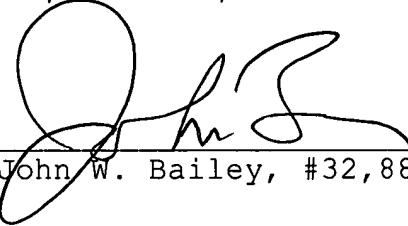
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Kristi L. Rupert, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 45,702) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$950.00 is attached to the Notice of Appeal which is being filed concurrently herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
John W. Bailey, #32,881

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

jwb
JWB/KLR:gmh
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